Linda earned a degree from University of Arizona in 1980 before embarking on a career dedicated to public service. Linda began her service as a congressional staffer for Representative Millicent Fenwick from her home State of New Jersey. She then served the people of Illinois as a legislative aide for Representative Bob Michel. In 1989, Linda began her service at the U.S. Department of Education, engaging with State and local officials and congressional offices in both the Intergovernmental Affairs Office and the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs, serving 9 of the 12 U.S. Secretaries of Education across political parties.

Linda has been an indispensable resource in my work on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and the Senate Appropriations Committee, of which I am a member. She assisted me to solve innumerable problems and concerns important to my constituents. She provided information about various administrations' implementation of important Federal programs, such as the Alaska Native Educational Equity Program, the Native American Language program, the State-Tribal Education Partnership program, and Impact Aid, in addition to providing insight into the Department's budget priorities. In addition to her expertise on these issues, she always approached my questions and concerns with the utmost diligence and attention, providing the support necessary for me to craft legislation that meets the needs of my constituents and the American people.

I am grateful for Linda's professionalism and dedication. I thank her and congratulate her on her upcoming retirement and wish her well in the future.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, on Monday, our Nation celebrated the life and legacy of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Like many Americans, it was a day of self-reflection for me. While leading a bipartisan delegation to Ukraine, I had a front-row seat to a nation struggling to hold on to its democracy in the face of a potential outside attack. This comes at a very poignant moment in America's history when we were reminded of the strength and fragility of our own democracy.

One year ago, a violent mob fueled by false claims of widespread election fraud stormed the U.S. Capitol. This was the most significant assault on the Capitol since the War of 1812. Although State and Federal judges ruled against efforts to overturn the results of the election, this lie of election fraud has continued to propagate. And now, those who didn't like the 2020 election results are trying to rewrite the rules.

Since the 2020 elections, Republican State lawmakers have passed an unprecedented number of bills to erode the authority of state and local elec-

tion officials. These new laws would strip secretaries of state of their authority, allow partisan ballot reviews, and even make local election officials criminally or financially liable for technical errors and actions, such as proactively sending out absentee ballot applications.

In total, 19 States have passed regressive laws that make it harder to vote and, in some extreme cases, may even allow Republican-controlled legislatures to overturn the results of a legitimate election by using false claims of voter fraud. In New Hampshire, over the past year, we have seen efforts to eliminate same-day voter registration, a measure that would disproportionately impact young voters, including college students and first-time voters.

Similarly, other efforts to prohibit students attending college in New Hampshire from voting in our State's elections would unduly burden—if not outright disenfranchise—many of those young voters. Other attempts to make voter registration more complicated have failed in court, including requirements for additional documentation for same-day registrants, and restrictions on which types of addresses are valid for registration.

These efforts are ongoing, with additional restrictive and burdensome measures being introduced as recently as the current legislative session. And it is not just our voter laws. Earlier this month, the Republican-controlled New Hampshire House approved a redistricting plan that can only be described as gerrymandering. Taken together, these measures represent a comprehensive and coordinated attempt to burden—or even deprive—certain Granite State citizens of their right to vote. Such blatant efforts to suppress the vote must not be tolerated.

The right to vote is one of the most fundamental and cherished principles of our democracy. The history of our Republic is marked by those seminal moments when we as a nation extended the right to cast a ballot to broader populations, thereby including more voices in our representative government: first after the Civil War with the 15th Amendment, then to women with the 19th Amendment, and then notably with the 1965 Voting Rights Act. As others have noted, the Voting Rights Act has historically drawn great bipartisan support for its reauthorization because the principles embodied in it go to the very heart of our democracy.

But the issues and challenges that are increasingly facing our voters are very real and very troubling—and we must take them seriously or risk eroding that most fundamental of rights. Making voter registration more difficult or making the process of voting more burdensome has disproportionate effects on some of the most vulnerable voters—whether those be young voters, communities of color, the poor, the homeless, among others. Eliminating or limiting opportunities for early vot-

ing, same-day registration, voting by mail, automatic registration, or the use of absentee ballots are all different pathways to the same pernicious effect—the suppression of the vote.

That is why I am proud to cosponsor the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. Together, these bills would standardize voting election laws across the country, expand voting access and restore key provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that have been struck down or weakened by the Supreme Court.

The right to vote isn't determined by political affiliation. It is the most sacred right enshrined in the U.S. Constitution for every eligible American and ensures that our country is, as President Lincoln said, "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

I am deeply disappointed by the inability—or unwillingness—of this august body to come together today to take this basic step in defense of our democracy. We, the U.S. Senate, ought to be the foremost champions and defenders of democracy, but today, I fear that we have allowed partisan considerations to distract us from that duty.

We cannot afford to stay silent and ignore these measures that attempt to undo the progress that we have made over decades. We especially cannot stay silent when all of us here witnessed the horrific events of January 2021 and the attempt to undo a legitimate election. Protecting voting rights for every American is the first and irreplaceable step towards protecting our democracy. We must take it seriously, we must not let it wither in the dark, and we must not stay silent. It is far too important—and once damaged, it is far too hard to rebuild.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING POWELL VALLEY MILLWORK

● Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week, I recognize an outstanding Kentucky small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize the small business, Powell Valley Millwork of Clay City, KY, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Twenty-seven years ago Jim Thornberry and his son Jimmy left the mining industry behind in search of a new venture. Shortly thereafter, Powell Valley Millwork was founded. The Thornberry's started their mill with the desire to harvest a tangible product within a sustainable industry, and that mission has stayed at the heart of their business throughout their decades of growth and success.

The talent and substance of Powell Valley Millwork draws directly from our State, with the mill focusing on only one species of lumber: poplar. As